



# Children's Mobility, Health & Happiness: A Canadian School Travel Planning Model

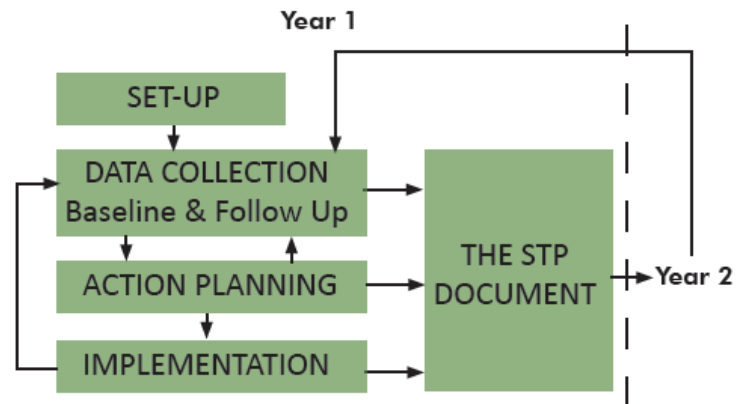
## School Travel Planning in Nova Scotia 2010-11 Year-End Report

For activities between Apr. 1, 2010 and Mar. 31, 2011

### School Travel Planning Project Overview

School Travel Planning (STP), is based in the belief that the shift toward more active lifestyles is possible for any community. Across Canada, and around the world, schools and their communities engaged in the STP process are reaping the benefits of more active children. Benefits include decreased pollution and traffic issues around their schools, increased mental alertness in the classroom, increased safety, and children who are happier, healthier and more excited to learn.

School Travel Planning gets the whole community working together to remove physical and attitudinal barriers to active school travel and establishes strategies that encourage the use of active transportation. With STP, active school travel becomes a realistic choice for a greater number of families, while educating citizens and pooling community resources efficiently. Under the guidance of an STP Facilitator, the STP process flows through five phases over two years (see the diagram to the right).



### Schools Involved

Twelve schools across Nova Scotia began the STP process in 2010-11. An STP committee was established at each school to oversee and implement the project. Each committee is made up of various combinations of the following:

- School board representatives
- Transportation planning/engineering professionals
- Public health professionals
- School administrators and staff
- Parents/caregivers and local community members
- Police departments

A part-time STP Facilitator regularly met with and supported each committee. A Facilitator based out of Sydney served the Cape Breton schools and a Facilitator based out of Halifax served the Mainland schools. The following table indicates the community and school board for each school.



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School	Community	School Board
St. Joseph Elementary	Sydney Mines	Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board
Seton Elementary	North Sydney	Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board
Membertou Elementary	Membertou	Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey Education Working Group
Shipyards Elementary	Sydney	Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board
Harbourside Elementary	Sydney	Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board
MacDonald Elementary	Dominion	Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board
Bridgewater Elementary	Bridgewater	South Shore Regional School Board
Chester District School	Chester	South Shore Regional School Board
St. Stephen’s Elementary	Halifax	Halifax Regional School Board
Ecole LeMarchant-St. Thomas Elementary	Halifax	Halifax Regional School Board
Cavalier Drive School	Lower Sackville	Halifax Regional School Board
Colby Village Elementary	Dartmouth	Halifax Regional School Board

An additional five schools began the STP process in 2007 and 2009. A lesser degree of support than current STP schools is provided to them as they continue to implement their Action Plans. They are:

- Grosvenor-Wentworth Elementary, Halifax (2007)
- Shatford Memorial Elementary, Hubbards (2007)
- John MacNeil Elementary, Dartmouth (2007)
- Westmount Elementary, Halifax (2009)
- Basinview Drive Community School, Bedford (2009)

The main focus of this report is on the 12 schools that began in 2010.

### Stakeholders Involved

Four Municipal Committees were formed to provide advice and assistance to the schools in their respective areas in the creation and implementation of the school plans. A Terms of Reference for each committee was developed and Statements of Support were signed by each organization represented on the committee. Regular meetings/communications were held with each committee by the STP Facilitators throughout the year. Listed below are the representatives on each municipal committee.

#### Cape Breton Regional Municipality Committee

- Cape Breton Regional Municipality
  - Planning Department
  - Engineering Department
  - Recreation Department
  - Public Works Department
  - Police
- NS Department of Health & Wellness
- Cape Breton District Health Authority – Public Health
- Heart & Stroke Foundation – Cape Breton Region
- Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board



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## Halifax Regional Municipality Committee

- Halifax Regional Municipality:
  - Traffic and Right of Way Services
  - Police
- RCMP
- Halifax Regional School Board
- NS Department of Health and Wellness
- Public Health

## Municipality of the District of Chester Committee

- Municipality of the District of Chester:
  - Recreation
  - Council Representation
- NS Department of Health and Wellness
- RECAP: Route Enhancement Committee of the Aspotogan Peninsula
- Community Walking Advocates
- South Shore Regional School Board

## Town of Bridgewater Committee

- Town of Bridgewater:
  - Planning Department
  - Parks, Recreation and Culture Department
  - Council Representation
  - Police
- Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation
- South Shore Health
- NS Department of Health and Wellness
- South Shore Active Communities
- Bridgewater Development Association
- South Shore Regional School Board

## 2010-2011 School Travel Planning Accomplishments

Since the spring of 2010, 12 schools were selected, agreements signed, STP Committee Terms of Reference documents developed and school profiles completed. Fall kick-offs were held for each school.

Baseline data collection took place during the fall 2010 and early winter 2011 with the following activities completed:

- Conducted a walkabout and created a summary report of walkabout results for each school
- Conducted a traffic/pedestrian/cyclist count at six schools
- Organized and implemented a hands up classroom survey at each school
- Organized and implemented a family survey at each school
- Conducted data entry and basic school-level analysis (with all data submitted to the national project body, Green Communities Canada)
- Created a summary report of key issues for each school, backed up by data from the various tools
- Began assisting each school in developing a written Action Plan
- Assisted with some Action Plan implementation at various schools



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## Success Stories

Even before the Action Plans were written, many of the STP schools were eager to start promoting walking and wheeling to school and begin projects to improve safety and convenience. Here are some examples:

### St. Joseph Elementary

- Celebrated International Walk to School Month
- Parents showed interest in creating a Walking School Bus

### Seton Elementary

- Celebrated Walk to School Month and included a special walk for the whole school
- Held a Winter Walk Day

### Membertou Elementary

- Held a Walking School Bus every Wednesday (Walking Wednesday) with over a 1/3 of the school participating some weeks
- Celebrated International Walk to School Month
- Accepted for the David Suzuki Birthday Party Walkabout at School

### Shipyards Elementary

- Celebrated International Walk to School Month

### Harbourside Elementary

- Began collaboration between the after-school program and school on a Walking School Bus
- Accepted for the David Suzuki Birthday Party Walkabout at School

### MacDonald Elementary

- Held a Winter Walk Day
- Celebrated International Walk to School Month
- Began collaboration on a Walking School Bus and the Heart & Stroke Walkabout Group

### Bridgewater Elementary

- Celebrated International Walk to School Month with a Walk to Breakfast event
- Incorporated findings from the data collection into recommendations for Bridgewater's Active Transportation (AT) Plan
- Parents and school showed interest in a Walking School Bus and Making Tracks AT safety skills training





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### **Chester District School**

- Collected speed data in front of the school
- Incorporated results of data collection into the municipality's developing AT Plan
- Showed interest in Making Tracks AT safety skills training

### **St. Stephen's Elementary**

- Hosted Take the Roof Off Winter Walk Day event with HRM Mayor Peter Kelly where the HRM Walking Charter was signed
- Developed a relationship with the NSCC campus with the support of Public Health to reduce smoking by college students near the school

### **Ecole LeMarchant-St. Thomas Elementary**

- Planned training in Making Tracks AT safety skills training
- Celebrated International Walk to School Month
- Showed interest in creating a Walking School Bus

### **Cavalier Drive School**

- Connected with the school ground naturalization project at the school to incorporate AT into the grounds redesign
- Showed interest in promotion and greater connection to the trails system close to the school with support of various partner groups

### **Colby Village Elementary**

- Celebrated International Walk to School Month
- Showed interest in creating a Walking School Bus

**Shatford Elementary School** began STP in 2007. It continues to work on the Shatford School Active Kids Trail connector, which will properly connect the school to a local rail trail. The trail is currently under construction with the financial and in-kind support (\$22,000 total) of Halifax Regional Municipality, the local Councillor Peter Lund, Shatford Memorial Home and School and the NS Department of Health and Wellness.

**Westmount Elementary** began STP in 2009. As part of its plan, the school launched the "Ardmore Arrow" Walking School Bus. Coverage of the Walking School Bus appeared on January 27, 2011 on EastLink Cable's "The 'Fax" news show, produced by Kings College journalism students. Check out the coverage at <http://vimeo.com/19253639> (coverage starts at the 10 minute mark – press play and then drag the time balloon to the right to advance).

**Basinview Drive Community School** began STP in 2009. It plans to launch the Pace Car program in the spring.

There were 11 known media hits on activities at the schools. See the appendix for a list.



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## Plans for 2011-2012

For the second year of STP, the following activities will take place:

- Organize a Spring celebration at each school
- Collect follow up data for each school (hands-up classroom survey and family survey) and conduct data entry and basic school-level analysis
- Compile information and complete a School Travel Plan document for each school
- Collect project feedback from committee members (municipal-level and school-level)
- Write provincial case study/summary report for NS
- Organize and oversee collection of year 2 baseline data in the fall 2011 and conduct data entry and basic school-level analysis
- Organize and oversee collection of year 2 follow up data (hands-up classroom survey) in the winter 2012 and conduct data entry and basic school-level analysis
- Support school committees in their Action Plan implementation

The Cape Breton Post - Living

Students encouraged to walk, bike to school

Published on January 10th, 2011  
Staff ~ The Cape Breton Post.ca

SYDNEY MINES — St. Joseph's Elementary is the second school on the Northside and the fifth in the school district to participate in a school travel planning walkabout.

Topics : Ecology Action Centre , School Advisory Council , Cape Breton

The school travel planning program is connected to the active and safe routes to school program through the Ecology Action Centre.

The two-year program looks at ways to safely increase the number of children walking and cycling to school, explained Stephanie Johnstone-Laurette, school travel plan facilitator for Cape Breton.

"We gathered information from family surveys and the School Advisory Council on key areas of concern for the surrounding neighbourhoods."

The school site visit and walkabout process includes both an actual walking tour of the neighbourhood as well as a debriefing session indoors immediately following the tour.

"The walkabout is an excellent opportunity to visually assess streets around the school and look into issues of safety, engineering and planning," she said. "It allows us to prioritize tasks for school travel planning and note what can be potentially accomplished in short and the long-term."

School travel planning utilizes a community-based approach that has proven effective, in a Canadian pilot test as well as other parts of the world, at getting more children to walk and bike to school. By doing so it reduces traffic congestion at schools, improves air quality, decreases climate change impacts and improves student physical fitness and alertness.

While the physical and attitudinal barriers to walking, cycling and other environmentally friendly modes of travel are addressed, all aspects of how children travel to and from school are investigated and documented. A key emphasis is placed on determining the extent to which a community allows for the independent mobility of children.

Along with short-term solutions such as new crosswalks and addressing the need for crosswalk guards, the program also looks at infrastructure including new sidewalks and changes in roadways. Each school develops a school travel plan that will look at bike shelters, bike racks and lockers, safety training for walking and cycling and raising community awareness.

"We had a positive turnout for St. Joseph's with local Coun. Clarence Prince, parents and teachers, and representatives from various regional municipality departments, health organizations and the school board," she said. "The walkabout is a valuable learning opportunity and those who participate will be in the best position to contribute constructively to action plan development."

The program also encourages the celebration of physical activity and environment through special event days and recognition and rewards for walking/biking.

jcollins@cbpost.com



Julie Collins - Cape Breton Post  
From left, Aron Ashton, physical activity health educator, Public Health, Stephanie Johnstone-Laurette, school travel plan facilitator for Cape Breton, active and safe routes to school, St. Joseph's Grade 4 teacher Diane Gaudet, St. Joseph's...

## STP Funders

Active & Safe Routes to School receives support in this national Green Communities Canada project from Health Canada, through the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, and from the Public Health Agency of Canada. In 2010-11, it also received support from the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, the Halifax Regional School Board, the Halifax Regional Municipality, the NS Department of Health and Wellness and the Town of Bridgewater. ASRTS thanks all of its supporters.

## School Travel Planning Contacts

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## Appendix: School Travel Planning Media Hits

The following media hits were recorded in 2010-11 for activities and events at STP schools across NS:

1. Jul. 6, 2010, CTV's Live @ Five show, coverage of Westmount Elementary and School Travel Planning
2. Aug. 19, 2010, Weekly News (Halifax West, Clayton Park) article by Yvette d'Entremont "Planning safe routes to school" about Westmount Elementary School Travel Planning project
3. Nov. 2010, Municipal World, article by Leslie Cook "School Travel Planning: Transforming municipalities – one school" with mention of Nova Scotia's project
4. Nov. 2, 2010, Bridgewater Bulletin, article by Stacey Colwell "Program being spearheaded by Bridgewater Elementary" on STP project
5. Nov. 10, 2010, Cape Breton Post, article by Sharon Montgomery-Dupe "Walkabout expected to help improve students' health and safety"
6. Nov. 23, 2010, Cape Breton Post, article by Julie Colins "Seton Elementary looks at ways to get kids walking to school" on STP project
7. Jan. 10, 2011, Cape Breton Post, article by Julie Colins "Students encouraged to walk, bike to school" on St. Joseph's Elementary in Sydney Mines, quoting Stephanie
8. Jan. 27, 2011, East Link Cable, "The 'Fax' Kings College produced show, coverage of Westmount Elementary's 'Ardmore Arrow' Walking School Bus <http://vimeo.com/19253639> (at 10 min. mark), quoting Jen
9. Feb. 8, 2011, CBC TV, supper hour news coverage of the St. Stephen's Elementary Winter Walk Day with the Mayor signing the HRM Walking Charter
10. Feb. 11, 2011, CBC TV, supper hour news re-broadcast of the St. Stephen's Elementary Winter Walk Day with the Mayor signing the HRM Walking Charter
11. February, 2011 issue, Branching Out (Dept. of Education publication), information piece appeared on ASRTS, including STP



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## News Release

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

February 8, 2011

### **Mayor Kelly Signs Walking Charter at School Winter Walk Event**

Toques, scarves and mitts were all the rage this snowy morning as HRM Mayor Peter Kelly walked to school with St. Stephen's Elementary students. The school's Winter Walk Day was part of the "Take the Roof off Winter" campaign and the Ecology Action Centre's Active & Safe Routes to School program. The event also marked the formal signing of HRM's Walking Charter.

The HRM Walking Charter was adopted by Council last Spring and is based on the "Walk 21" International Charter for Walking. It recognizes the importance of and need for walkable communities.

"Today's event was great," says Richard MacLellan, Manager of HRM's Sustainable Environment Management Office. "The Walking Charter signifies a lot of the right things we are doing and need to do as a sustainable community. The EAC's Active & Safe Routes to School Program is a wonderful program that very much mirrors the economic, environmental and social benefits of the Charter. I appreciate the opportunity that St. Stephen's Elementary gave us to participate in their Winter Walk Day event and the Ecology Action Centre for spearheading this specific program."

For a copy of the charter presented to council, visit <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/documents/100406ca81ii.pdf>.

The Mayor joined one of the teacher- and parent-led student groups that walked through the neighbourhood to school. With local Councillor Jerry Blumenthal looking on, the Mayor then signed the Walking Charter. Students, parents and staff cheered a big "thank you" once the document was signed.

The Winter Walk Day and Walking Charter tie in well with the school's efforts to create and carry out a School Travel Plan, which aims to increase the number of students who walk or wheel to school. It helps make it safer and easier for students to make the trip to school under their own steam, rather than being driven short distances by their parents. School Travel Planning is an initiative of Active & Safe Routes to School.

Twelve schools across Nova Scotia, including St. Stephen's Elementary and three other HRM schools, began the School Travel Planning process this fall. Active & Safe Routes to School receives support in this national Green Communities Canada project from Health Canada, through the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, and from the Public Health Agency of Canada as well as the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, the Halifax Regional School Board, the Halifax Regional Municipality, the NS Department of Health and Wellness and the Town of Bridgewater.

"Being active on the way to school benefits children's health, helps the environment and creates a greater sense of community at the school. Children who are active in the morning arrive alert and ready to learn," says Jennifer McGowan, of Active & Safe Routes to School. "School Travel Planning at St. Stephen's has brought together staff from Public Health, HRM, police, the school board, as well as the families of students. The school committee has been working really hard to overcome barriers to active travel and encourage more children and their families to choose walking or biking to school."

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For photos and more information, contact:

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